City of KINGSTON

Twitter User Guide

June 2015

my community life

www.mycommunitylife.com.au

My Community Life is supported by the Community Engagement Team at Kingston Council.

You can contact us on:

Phone: 9581 4809

Email: mycommunitylife@kingston.vic.gov.au

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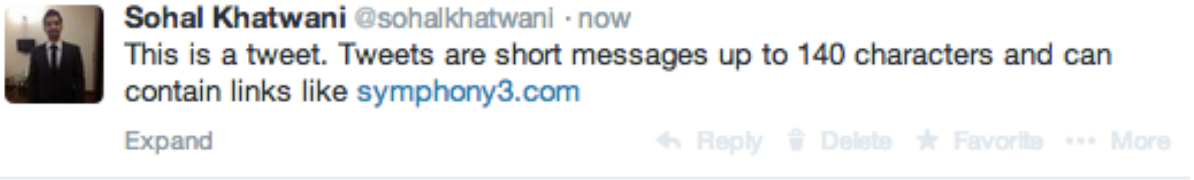
1. Introduction

This guide explains how to set up and use a Twitter account on www.twitter.com. Twitter is a service for sending and reading short messages, with over 302 million active users worldwide. As of March 2015, Twitter users posted 500 million tweets per day.

Twitter can be a valuable tool for sharing links and other information across a network and driving traffic back to your website. Twitter is also a valuable tool for relationship building and information gathering. Treat the list of accounts that you follow as both **community** and **information resource**: connect with others in your industry, and tap into knowledge from outside your immediate network.


Sohal Khatwani @sohalkhatwani · now
This is a tweet. Tweets are short messages up to 140 characters and can contain links like symphony3.com
Expand
Reply
Delete
Favorite
More

1.1 USING THIS GUIDE

New users should follow this guide directly, in order to learn about and set up a new account.

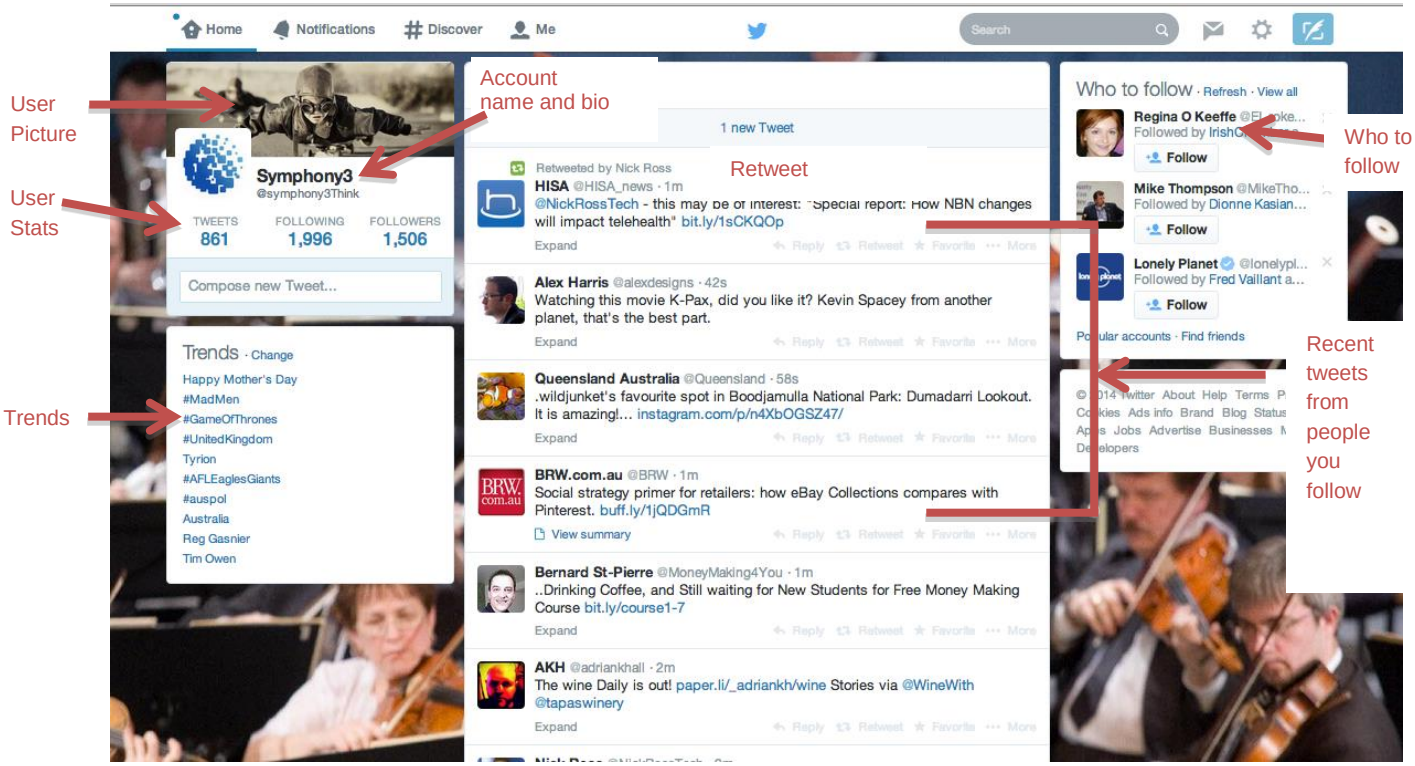
- *Section 2* provides an overview of the service.
- *Section 3* covers the practical steps required to set up a new account.
- *Sections 4-7* explains how to post content and use the various tools

Advanced users can use this guide as a reference document, and may find the Appendices useful. These cover customised link-shortening services, and an introduction to the range of Twitter client programs that are currently available for desktop computers and smartphones.

This guide focuses on using Twitter through the website, at http://www.twitter.com. This is where you will create your account, and new users will generally start here. More advanced users typically access Twitter via mobile and desktop client programs that offer a range of tools to streamline the process of using Twitter. These are covered in *Appendix B*.

2. Snapshot of a Twitter home page

Viewed through a web browser, the Twitter home page looks like this:



At the top left of the screen, you can see account details, including your user picture, name, bio and statistics on the number of tweets posted, accounts followed, and accounts you are following. The right-hand column contains suggestions on who to follow based on the accounts you currently follow, the accounts followed by the users you have chosen to follow, and how other users express interest in Tweets sent from these accounts.

On the left, you can see a Trends section determined by an algorithm and, by default, are tailored for you based on who you follow and your location. The middle section shows the latest tweets, Retweets and favourited tweets in your network of people or companies you follow.

Before you get started with setting up an account here are some basic Twitter vocabulary definitions you should know:

- **Tweet:** Short messages up to 140 characters posted on Twitter.
- **Twitter Handle:** This is also known as a username. Your name on Twitter.
- **Follow:** To subscribe to a person's or company's updates on Twitter.
- **Retweet (or RT):** To repeat what someone else has already tweeted.

We will explain more of the Twitter vocabulary in different sections of this document.

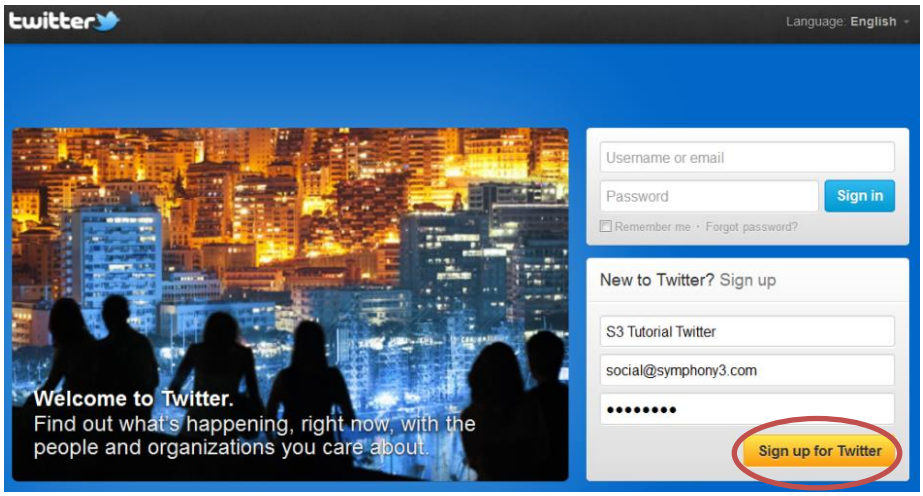
To create a new account, follow the instructions in the next section.

3. Setting up a Twitter account

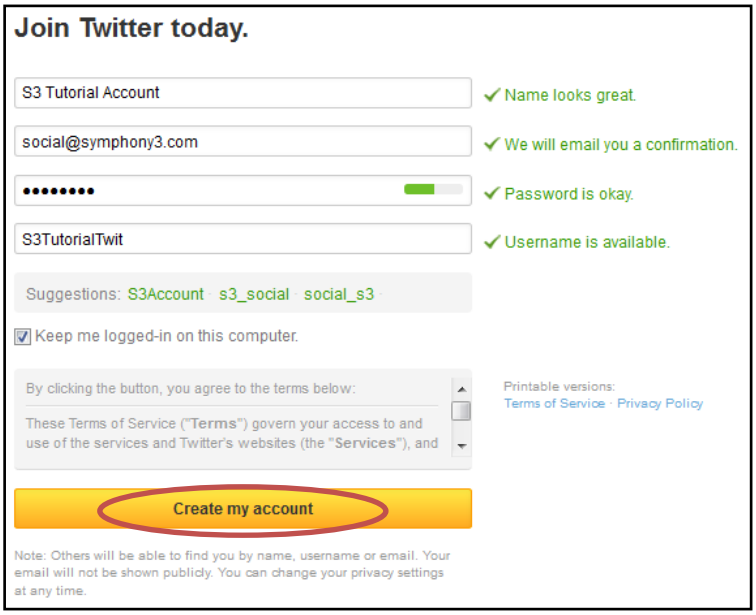
3.1 SIGN UP

To create a new Twitter account, go to the main Twitter web page: http://www.twitter.com

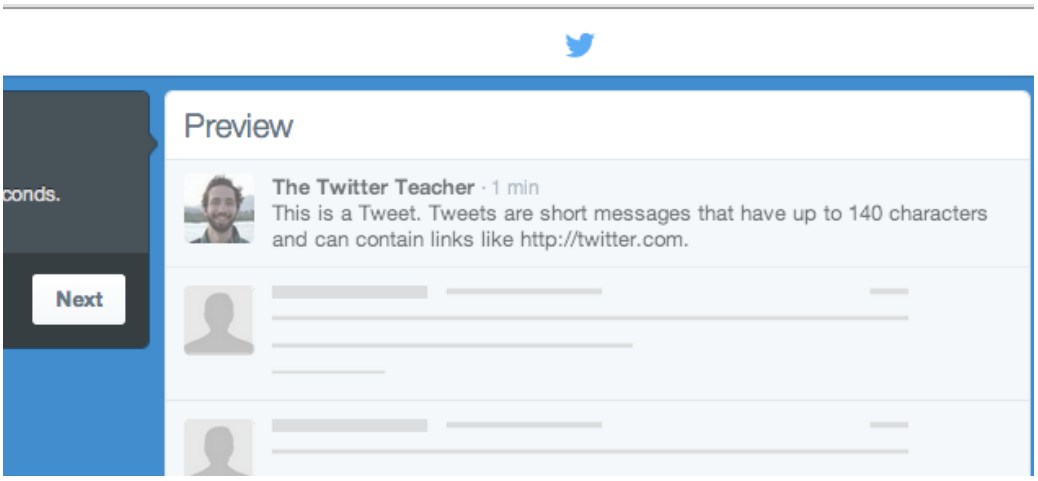
Enter your name, email address and password, and then click on **Sign up for Twitter**.



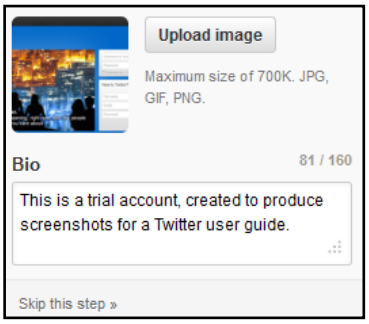
Note that each Twitter account must have a separate email address. You will then be sent to the following screen. This verifies that the email address isn't in use for any other Twitter accounts, checks whether your chosen username is available, and suggests other similar names in case the original has been taken. When you're happy with a username, click **Create my account**. When signing up for an account make your Twitter handle relevant and avoid underscores.


Join Twitter today.
S3 Tutorial Account
Name looks great.
social@symphony3.com
We will email you a confirmation.
••••••••
Password is okay.
S3TutorialTwit
Username is available.
Suggestions: S3Account · s3_social · social_s3
Keep me logged-in on this computer.
By clicking the button, you agree to the terms below:
These Terms of Service ("Terms") govern your access to and use of the services and Twitter's websites (the "Services"), and
Printable versions:
Terms of Service · Privacy Policy
Create my account
Note: Others will be able to find you by name, username or email. Your email will not be shown publicly. You can change your privacy settings at any time.

You'll then be prompted to start **Following** at least five people and at least five **Interests** in order to build a timeline of recent tweets. You can search for specific accounts, or choose a few from the list of recommendations. We'll cover adding additional followers later on in *Section 5.*


conds.
Next
Preview
The Twitter Teacher · 1 min
This is a Tweet. Tweets are short messages that have up to 140 characters and can contain links like http://twitter.com.

3.2 USER PICTURE AND BIO


Upload image
Maximum size of 700K. JPG, GIF, PNG.
Bio
81 / 160
This is a trial account, created to produce screenshots for a Twitter user guide.
Skip this step »

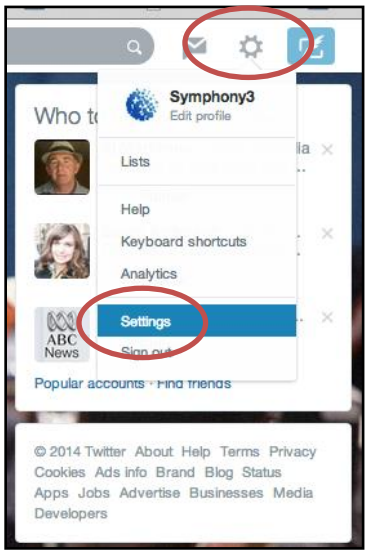
Your **user picture** is important: it will help people to recognise your tweets, and can provide a visual link to an existing brand.

- If using an **organisational logo**, make sure you have permission to do so
- If you are creating an account for personal comments, a **photo** would be a better choice.
- Pick something with a clear shot of your face, to give a more personal presence to your account. The user picture will generally be displayed as a small square image, so keep it as clear as possible.
- Upload an **image** in .JPG, .PNG or .GIF format, with a maximum file size of 700k.
- Add a short **bio** (maximum of 160 characters) to help people learn more about you or your organisation. This will be shown in your profile, and is displayed in Twitter search results. You can also use hashtags in your bio so searches can find your profile. We will explain hashtags in a later section.
- Include the **URL** of your organisation's website.

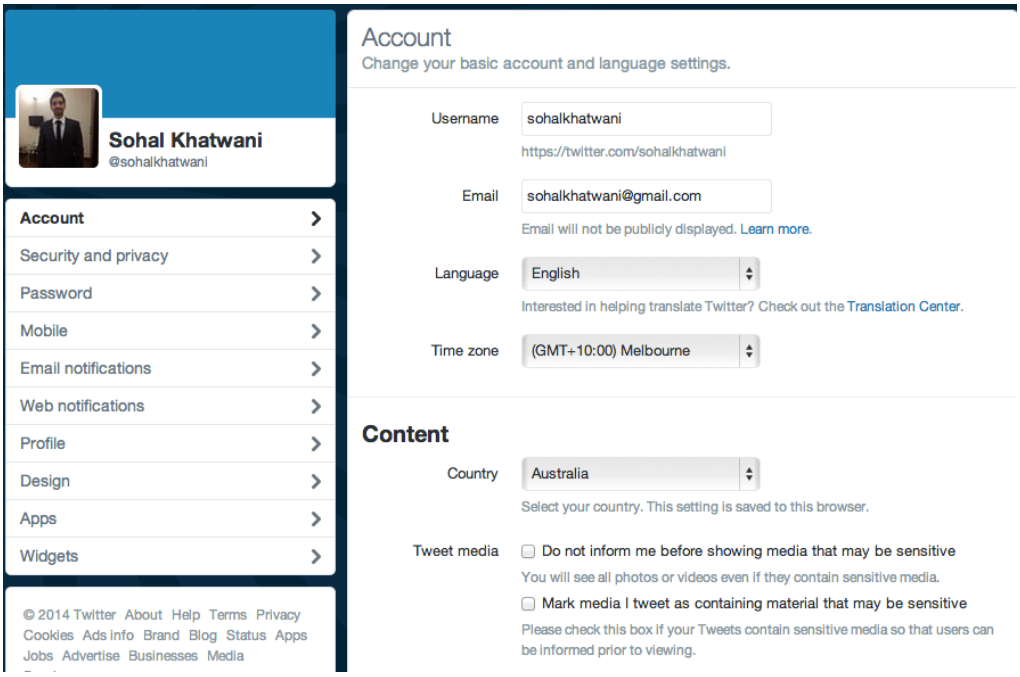
If you need to make it clear that the account represents personal views, and not those of your employer, this is a good place for a disclaimer to that effect. Similarly, if you are creating an official corporate account, mention that in the bio. **Transparency** is important – be truthful and honest about the type of content that you will be posting.

3.3 OTHER SETTINGS

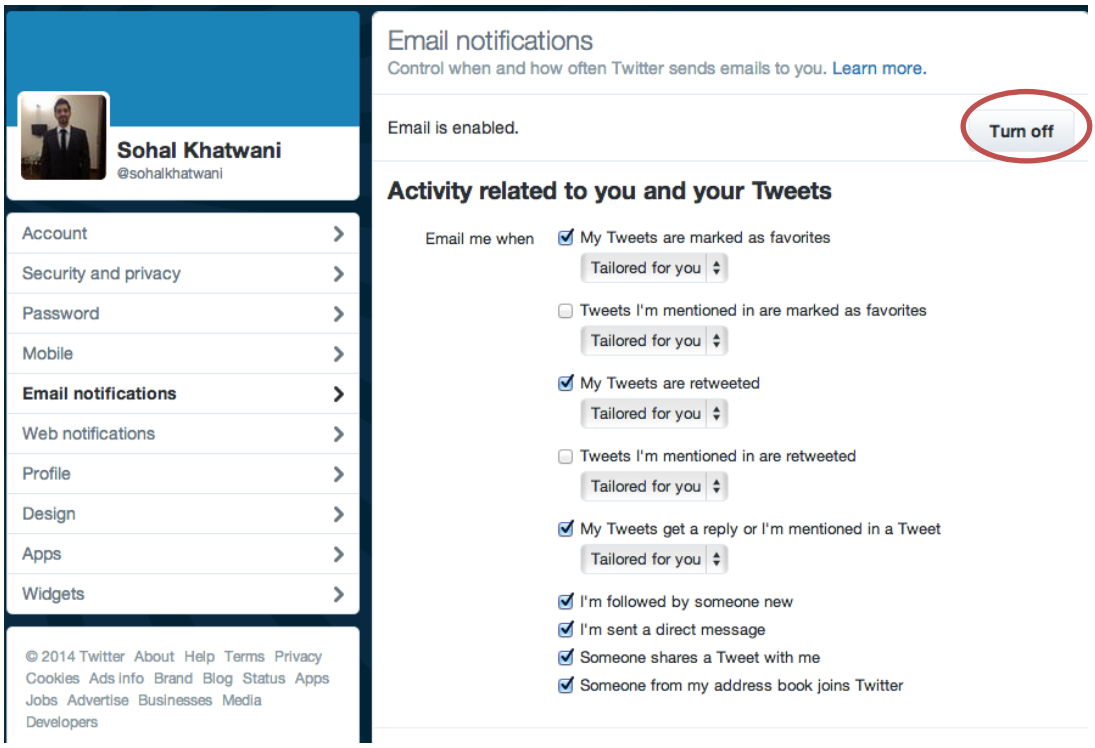
From the main Twitter web page, you can access your **Settings** by clicking the gear drop-down menu in the top right-hand corner.



- The most important areas here are your **Account** settings, and your **Notifications**.
- Under **Account**, you can set your time zone and location, and to change your email address or username.
- Checking the box under your email address allows people to find your Twitter account if they have sent or received email from you.

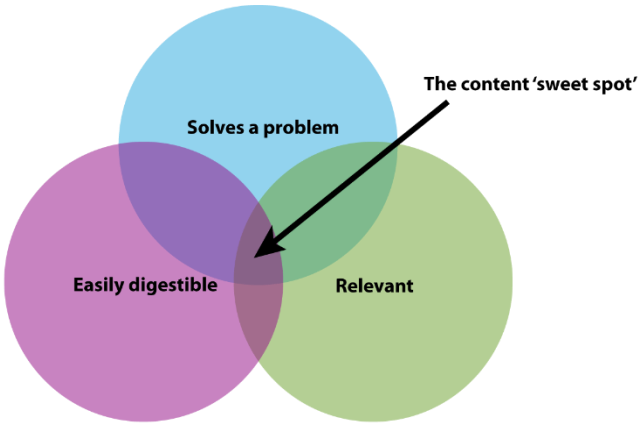

Sohal Khatwani
@sohalkhatwani
Account
Security and privacy
Password
Mobile
Email notifications
Web notifications
Profile
Design
Apps
Widgets
© 2014 Twitter About Help Terms Privacy Cookies Ads info Brand Blog Status Apps Jobs Advertise Businesses Media
Account
Change your basic account and language settings.
Username
sohalkhatwani
https://twitter.com/sohalkhatwani
Email
sohalkhatwani@gmail.com
Email will not be publicly displayed. Learn more.
Language
English
Interested in helping translate Twitter? Check out the Translation Center.
Time zone
(GMT+10:00) Melbourne
Content
Country
Australia
Select your country. This setting is saved to this browser.
Tweet media
Do not inform me before showing media that may be sensitive
You will see all photos or videos even if they contain sensitive media.
Mark media I tweet as containing material that may be sensitive
Please check this box if your Tweets contain sensitive media so that users can be informed prior to viewing.

Finally, adjust your **Email Notifications** settings. By default, Twitter will send you an email every time someone sends you a message, follows your account, or interacts with any of your messages. Adjust these settings as required.


Sohal Khatwani
@sohalkhatwani
Account
Security and privacy
Password
Mobile
Email notifications
Web notifications
Profile
Design
Apps
Widgets
© 2014 Twitter About Help Terms Privacy Cookies Ads info Brand Blog Status Apps Jobs Advertise Businesses Media Developers
Email notifications
Control when and how often Twitter sends emails to you. Learn more.
Email is enabled.
Turn off
Activity related to you and your Tweets
Email me when
My Tweets are marked as favorites
Tailored for you
Tweets I'm mentioned in are marked as favorites
Tailored for you
My Tweets are retweeted
Tailored for you
Tweets I'm mentioned in are retweeted
Tailored for you
My Tweets get a reply or I'm mentioned in a Tweet
Tailored for you
I'm followed by someone new
I'm sent a direct message
Someone shares a Tweet with me
Someone from my address book joins Twitter

4. Posting content on Twitter

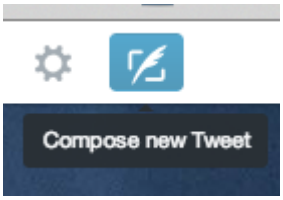
Now that your account is set up, what should you post? Good content hits the ‘sweet spot’ between relevance, readability and usefulness to your audience.

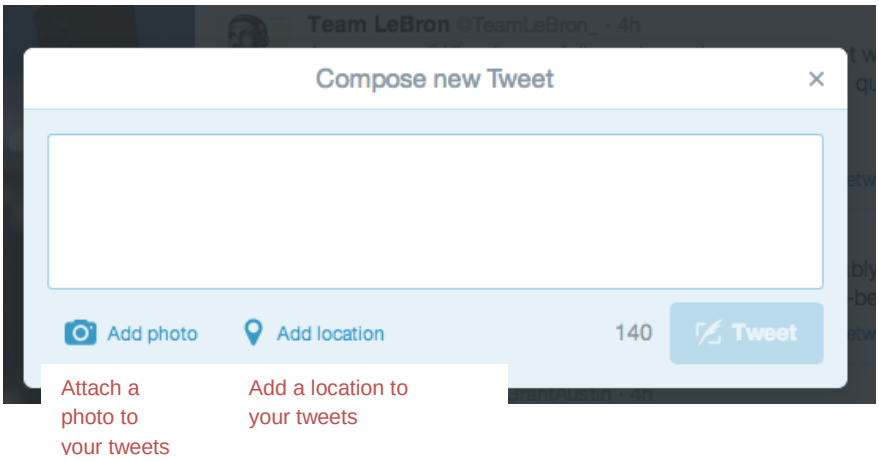


4.1 SHORT MESSAGES

Twitter places a 140 character limit on messages. Keeping your messages short without losing clarity is a skill that takes some practice to perfect. Remember: people can see a huge number of messages on Twitter each day. Keep your tweets concise, relevant and interesting, or they will often be ignored.

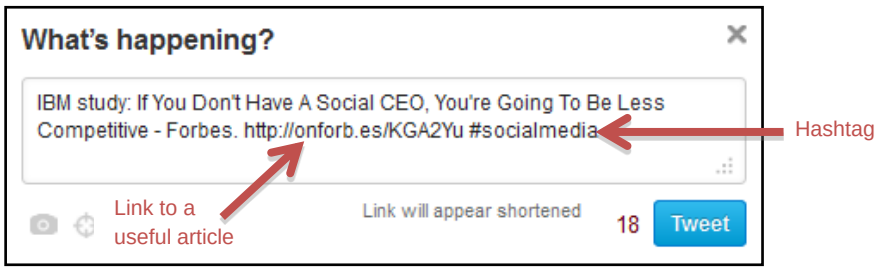
To compose a new tweet from the Twitter website, click on the blue button in the top right-hand corner. This will open a window for you to enter your message.





- **Announcements** work well on Twitter. If you are launching a new project or giving updated information on a current one, use Twitter to quickly let people know about it.
- If your message doesn't fit into the character limit, send a short announcement with a **link** to your website or blog – these can contain more detailed information.
- **Use plain English**. 140 characters may not feel like a lot of space, but over-using abbreviations makes it hard for people to understand & digest your messages. Stick to one message per tweet: don't try to squeeze too much in.
- **Keep it relevant**. Think about your organisation's unique selling points: what sort of information will people expect you to provide for them? What will your followers want to hear about, and why are they listening to you?
- **Choose an appropriate tone**. Twitter is a conversational medium, and you may find that the most appropriate tone is less formal than that used in newsletters and other announcements. Showing a bit of personality helps people to relate to the organisation, and makes them more likely to engage with you.
- **Share links** to web content that your followers might be interested in, relating to your area of expertise. These help to keep a steady stream of content coming from your account, and show that you're knowledgeable about your area.
- **Don't forget that social media is about conversations**, not just broadcasting announcements. If people respond to your tweets, engage them in conversation. Word of mouth referrals from your followers are the best promotion for your account. To send messages to specific individuals see the sections on *@-replies* and *Direct Messages* below.

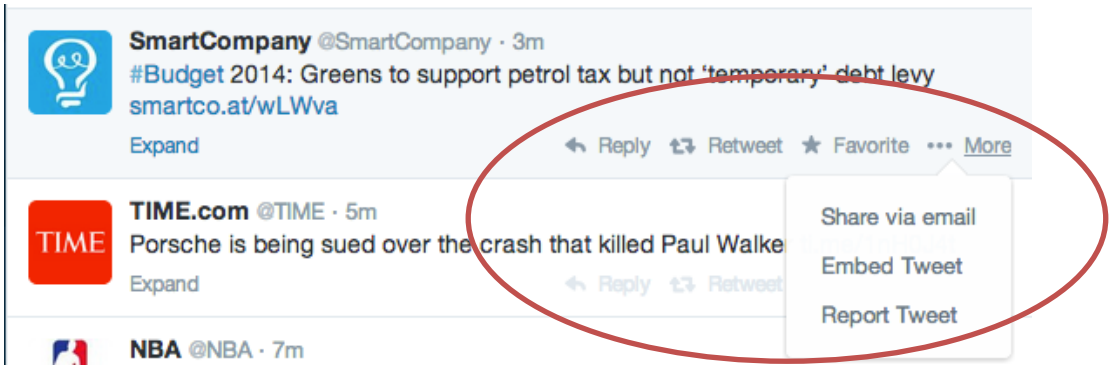
In the example below, the user is sharing an article from Forbes.com with their followers. The link has been automatically shortened to save space, and the message contains a hashtag (#socialmedia) to help the message be seen by a larger audience.


What's happening?
IBM study: If You Don't Have A Social CEO, You're Going To Be Less Competitive - Forbes. http://onforb.es/KGA2Yu #socialmedia
Hashtag
Link to a useful article
Link will appear shortened
18
Tweet

4.2 REPLY, RETWEET, FAVORITE AND MORE

When you see a tweet come up on your newsfeed you are able to take the following actions for that particular tweet:

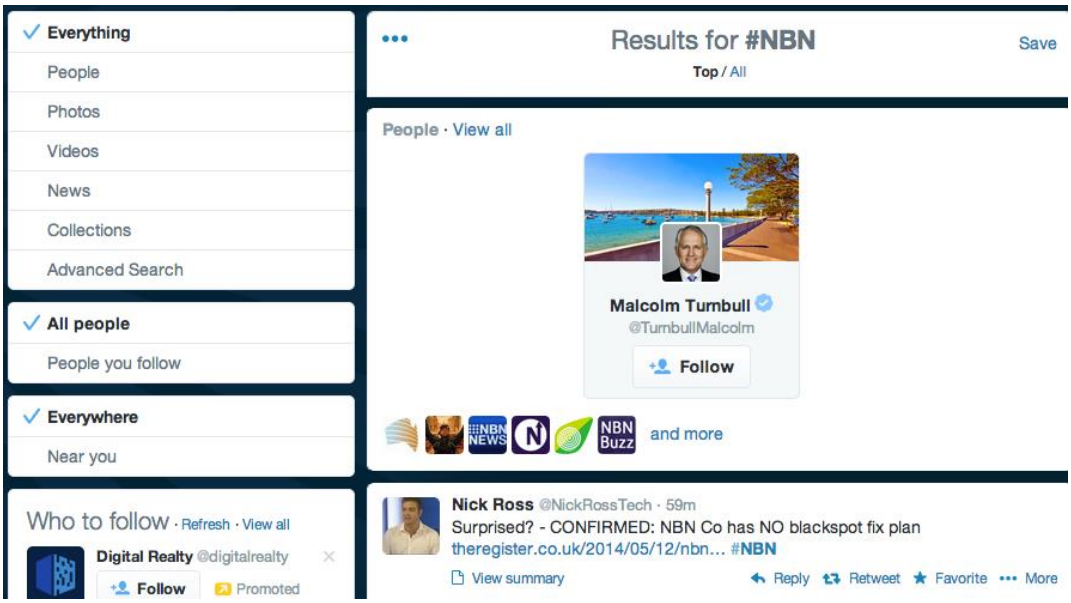
- **Reply.** Send a public message to the user that created or retweeted the tweet
- **Retweet (or RT).** Repeat what has been said on your profile.
- **Favourites**. To mark a message as a Favourite, move your cursor over it and click the star button. This is a good way of noting important messages to follow up later, or bookmarking important messages to make them easier to find.
- **More.** You can share the tweet via email, embed it to your website or report the tweet if it is offensive and you believe goes against Twitter's policy.



4.3 HASHTAGS

Twitter automatically converts any word immediately following a hash symbol (#) into a link. These are referred to as **hashtags** and are a popular way of tagging content on Twitter. The example below has used NBN as a keyword, by adding a hashtag before it.

Clicking on this link brings up a keyword search for that particular search term:

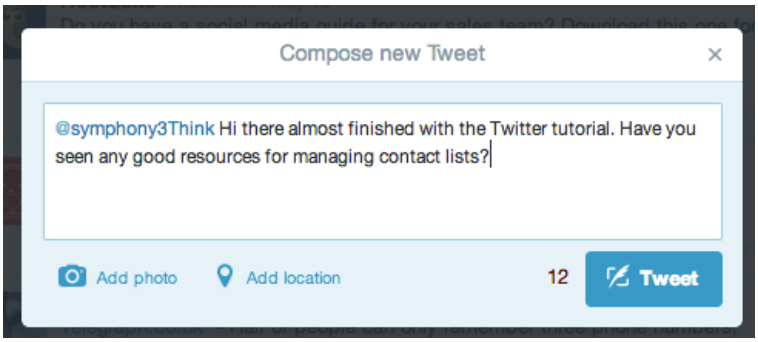


Hashtags are often monitored by many others interested in that topic, and can help to get your tweets seen by more than just your immediate followers.

- **Events and conferences**: These often publicise a common hashtag for use during the event, to help bring the “back channel” conversations into a common area.
- **Content injection**: If you find a relevant hashtag that is being regularly used, it can help you to reach people beyond your immediate followers list. In the example above, the tweet from DBCDE would be seen by anyone using Twitter to discuss the NBN.
- **Don’t go overboard**! Adding too many hashtags reduces the space for your actual message, and is often regarded as spam.

4.4 @ REPLIES

To send a public message “to” one or more people, add an “@” symbol before their username. This will send them a notification of your message, and turns the username into a clickable link to their profile. These links are an important way of discovering new contacts to add to your network – they help you to see who your contacts are talking to, helping you to make new connections.

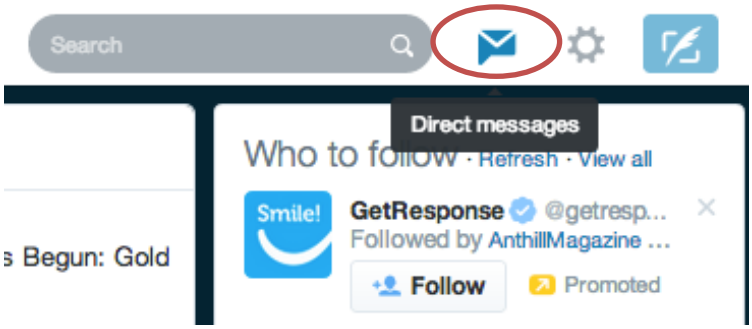

Compose new Tweet
@symphony3Think Hi there almost finished with the Twitter tutorial. Have you seen any good resources for managing contact lists?
Add photo
Add location
12
Tweet

Note that messages *beginning* with an **@reply** (such as the example above) will only show up in the news feed of users who follow both the sender *and* recipient. This prevents personal replies from filling up other news feeds, although the conversation is still visible to anyone directly viewing the **profile** of either the sender or recipient.

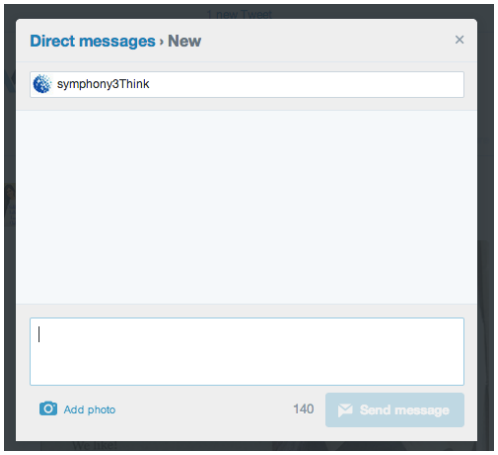
If you want your message to appear in the news feed of all your followers, don’t start the message with an @reply. As long as the message starts with other letters, numbers or punctuation marks, it can be seen by all your followers.

4.5 DIRECT MESSAGES

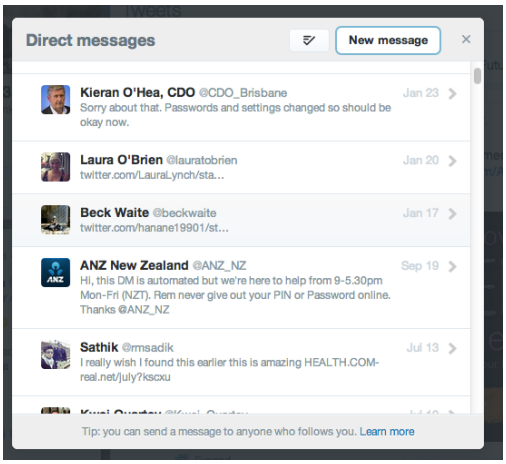
These are private messages, visible only to the sender and recipient. To access Direct Messages from the Twitter website on a desktop, select the message icon on the top right hand side of the page.



Note that they can only be sent to a user who follows you directly. To send a message, either click “New Message” in the Direct Messages screen, or start a tweet using the format “*d username*”



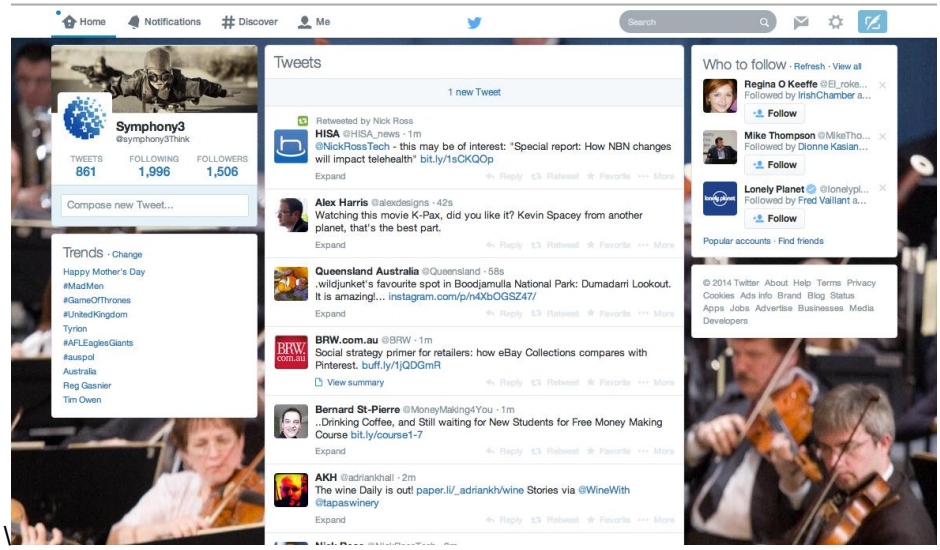
For example, a direct message sent to Symphony 3 would look like this:


Direct messages
New message
Kieran O'Hea, CDO @CDO_Brisbane
Jan 23
Sorry about that. Passwords and settings changed so should be okay now.
Laura O'Brien @lauratobrien
Jan 20
twitter.com/LauraLynch/sta...
Beck Waite @beckwaite
Jan 17
twitter.com/hanane19901/st...
ANZ New Zealand @ANZ_NZ
Sep 19
Hi, this DM is automated but we're here to help from 9-5.30pm Mon-Fri (NZT). Rem never give out your PIN or Password online. Thanks @ANZ_NZ
Sathik @rmsadik
Jul 13
I really wish I found this earlier this is amazing HEALTH.COM-real.net/july?kscxu
Tip: you can send a message to anyone who follows you. Learn more

5. Reading content on Twitter

5.1 TWITTER WEB INTERFACE

There are two common ways to view Twitter accounts using a web browser. The first is the **Twitter Home screen**, found at https://www.twitter.com. Use this page to read your Timeline, containing tweets from the accounts that you follow. These are displayed in the right-hand column.



The second is your **profile page**. You can access this by clicking the profile picture near the “tweet” button (in the upper right hand corner in the top navigation) and the “view profile” option that will appear under it. Alternatively go directly to https://twitter.com/#!/YOURUSERNAME:

The profile page shows many of the same options as the Home page, but by default your own tweets will be displayed in the centre column.

On the left-hand side of the screen, you can see your own account details, which contains the following:

- **Bio**. A short bio about you or your organisation. It is a good idea to include hashtags so your profile has better changes for showing up on the who to follow section on the right hand side. This section also shows where you are located (based on your settings selection), link to your website and the date joined.
- **Photos and Videos.** This displays all the photos and videos posted by you.
- **Summary Bar.** This displays statistics on the number of tweets posted, accounts followed, and accounts you are following. It also displays your favourited tweets and lists you are part of or have created. To see a list of **Favourites**, click on this tab. **Lists** are the groups of users you have created. Lists are a powerful tool for organising large numbers of accounts that you follow on Twitter. Lists are explained in more detail in Section 5.3.
- **Whom to follow.** The right-hand column contains suggestions on who to follow based on the accounts you currently follow, the accounts followed by the users you have chosen to follow, and how other users express interest in Tweets sent from these accounts.

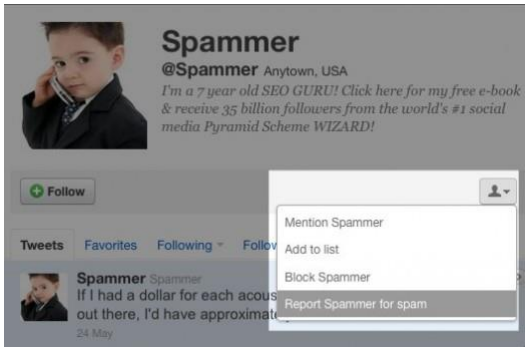
- **Trends.** The bottom right-hand column contains a Trends section determined by an algorithm and, by default, are tailored for you based on who you follow and your location.

5.2 FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS

Twitter is a social networking tool. It allows you to build a network of contacts, drawing on them as a source of information, and publishing messages where they will be seen by relevant people.

To follow an account on Twitter, click on their user name and then click the Follow button. This will subscribe you to all of that user's tweets.

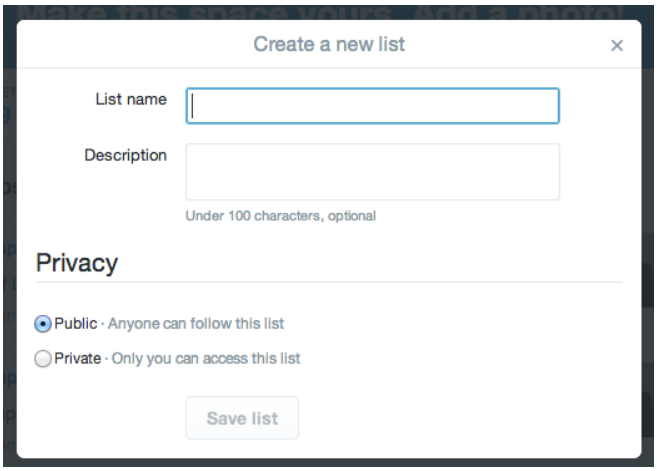
- **Follow people and organisations** in your industry – they are a valuable source of industry news, and are likely to be the most interested in what you post.
- **You may want to follow customers**, or people talking about you on Twitter. If you want to know what people are saying about you but are worried about publicly following them, consider using a private List instead. These are detailed in the next section.
- **You don't have to follow back all the accounts that follow you**. However, you may want to engage those people in conversations. Take a look at their recent posts: do they post content that you're interested in? If so, reciprocate and follow them back.
- **Keep an eye out for spam accounts**. Twitter has a large number of automated accounts, programmed to follow and send messages to people.
- **Block and report spam accounts** by selecting "*Report user for spam*" from the dropdown menu on their profile.


Spammer
@Spammer Anytown, USA
I'm a 7 year old SEO GURU! Click here for my free e-book & receive 35 billion followers from the world's #1 social media Pyramid Scheme WIZARD!
Follow
Tweets
Favorites
Following
Mention Spammer
Add to list
Block Spammer
Report Spammer for spam

5.3 LISTS

These are groups of Twitter accounts. You are not required to follow an account in order to add it to a list – they are a good way of monitoring accounts that you don't want to follow directly. To access your account's Lists, use the dropdown menu under your profile section.

Lists can be made **Public** or **Private**.



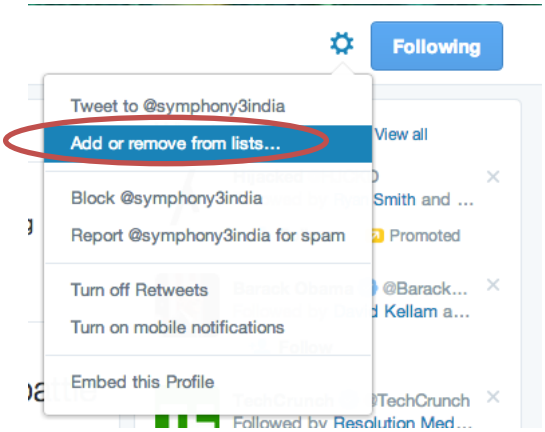
Public Lists are visible to everyone.

- Use these to assemble **information resources** on a specific topic
- Keep a list of people active on a specific hashtag, or attending an event
- Make a **key influencers** list you can read when you don't have time to go through your full timeline – helping you to find valuable information quickly

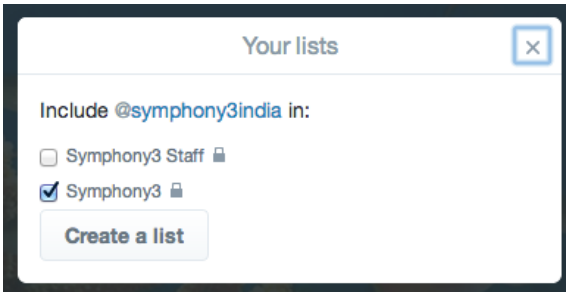
Private Lists are only visible to the person who created them, when they are logged in to their account.

- Use them to discreetly keep track of accounts, without needing to follow them
- Monitor lobby groups, political figures, or outspoken community groups or figures

To add an account to a list, click their username, and then select from the gear drop-down menu:



Then, select the list(s) you want to add the account to, or create a new list.



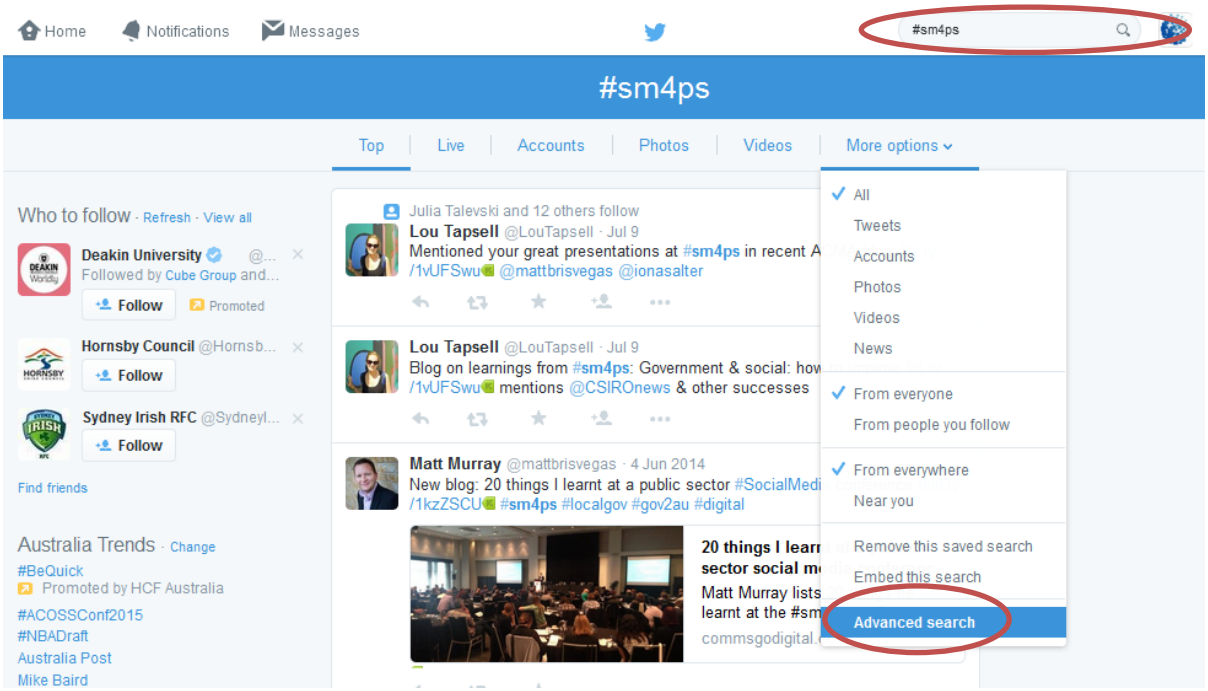
These are some examples of public and private lists:

- **Conference attendees** (*Public*). Many conferences have an active back-channel discussion happening on Twitter. Use the event hashtag to find other attendees before and during an event, and add them to a list so you can easily keep on top of what they post. By making the list Public, it can be used as a resource by others – your account becomes the connection point that links together people from the conference.
- **Company staff** (*Public*). Particularly valuable for accounts used in a Communications or PR role. Many people in your company will already using Twitter. Adding their accounts to a list helps you to find out what they are saying in public, and doesn't require you to directly follow those accounts. By keeping up to date on other commentary about the company, you can support other accounts by re-tweeting important information, and maintain a more consistent communications approach.
- **Critics** (*Private*). Do particular journalists, bloggers or other community members have a strong influence on public opinion in your area? Adding them to a Private list isn't as intrusive as Following them or adding them to a Public list, but still allows you to subscribe to their public posts. You should be aware of any criticism levelled at your company, and prepared to respond appropriately.

Lists are especially valuable for managing accounts with large numbers of followers. It's a good idea to think about potential lists early on, to minimise the work needed to set them up in future.

5.4 SEARCHES

To search for tweets about a particular topic, click on the search window in the upper right corner of the screen. Type in your search and you will be taken to a results page like this:

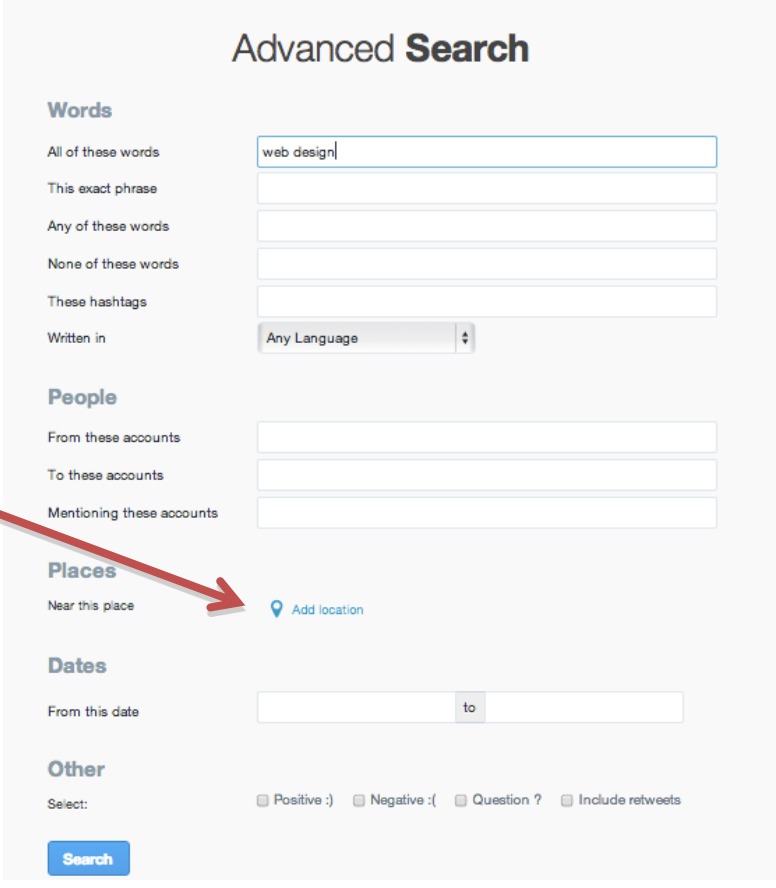


To **save a search**, click the *Save* link on the top right corner. Each account can have up to 25 searches saved at a time.

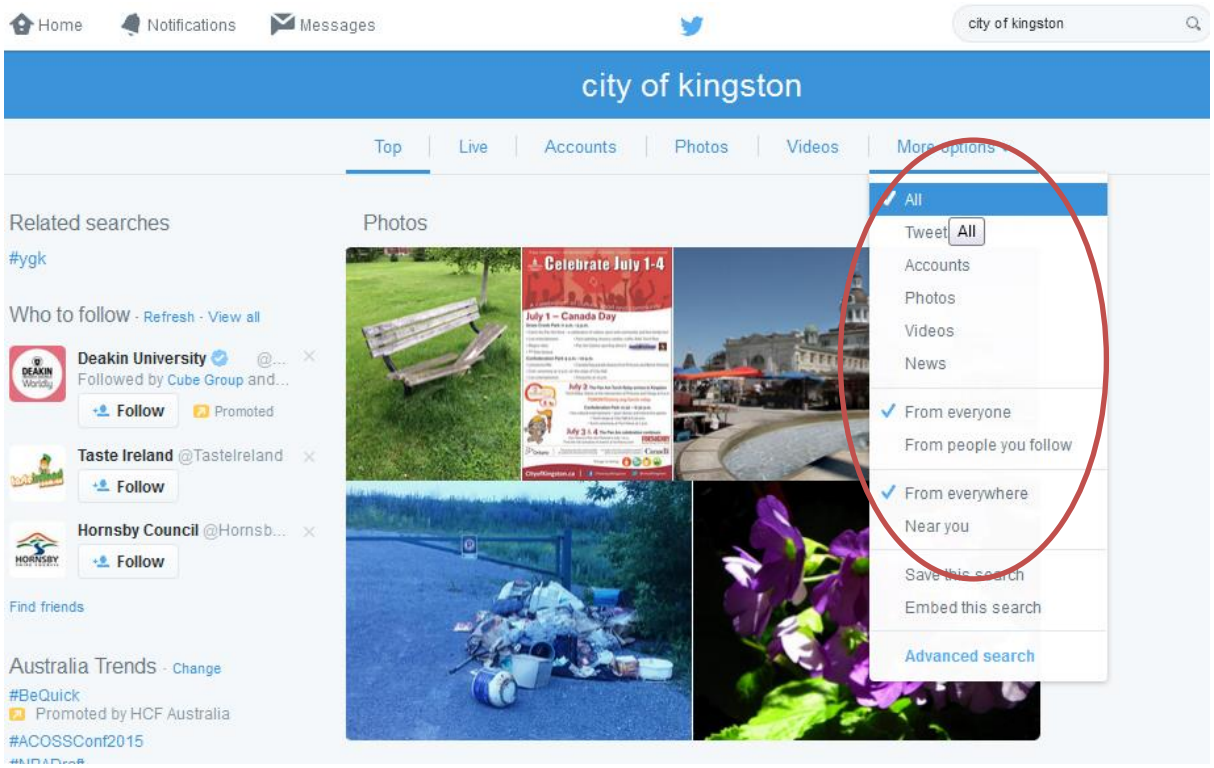
You can also refine your search using the **Advanced Search** and you will be taken to a page such as the one to the right.

The **Advanced Search** page allows you to select more detailed keywords, exclude keywords, and search in particular accounts.

You can also restrict your search by location, although this feature relies on users either providing location details in their profile, or enabling GPS tags on their tweets. It can be useful when specific information is needed, but can often miss valuable content from accounts that don't use the geo-location functions in Twitter.

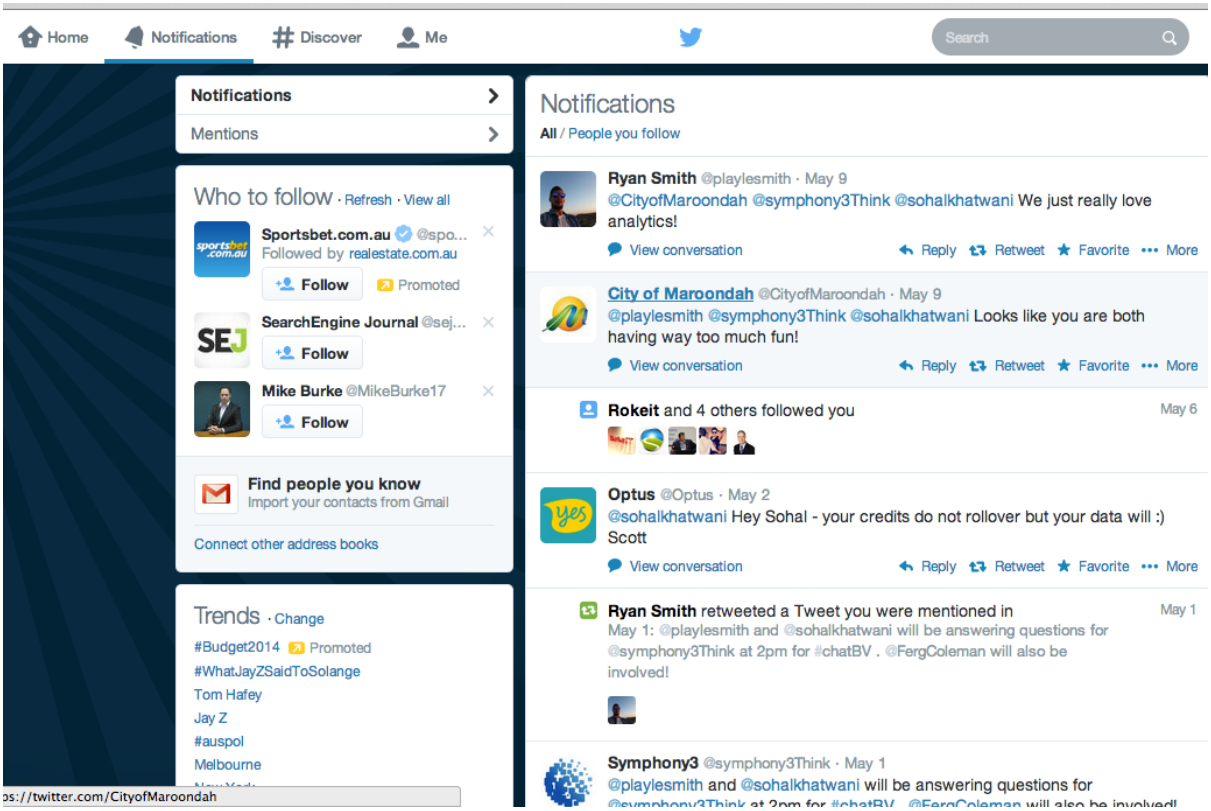


Clicking on *Search* takes you to a **results page**. You can continue refining your search by selecting one of the options on the left hand side or returning to the Advanced Search option and starting again. It is also possible to save an advanced search when you are done.



6. Notifications tab

The **Notifications** tab offers a simple way to see how others on Twitter are interacting with you.



There are two tabs in the left-hand column of this page. Notifications and Mentions help you to assess how well you are engaging with your audience on Twitter.

- **Notifications**: A summary of new followers for your account, favourite tweets, Tweets directed to you (@replies and mentions) and re-tweets of your posts.
- **Mentions**: This shows each message containing only an @reply and mention of your account name.

Appendix A: Link shortening services

Links in Twitter posts are often shortened to preserve space. Twitter uses its own service (**T.co**) to automatically shorten links posted through the Twitter website. Other services exist, allowing users to access extra features such as **customisable short URLs** and **detailed analytics**.

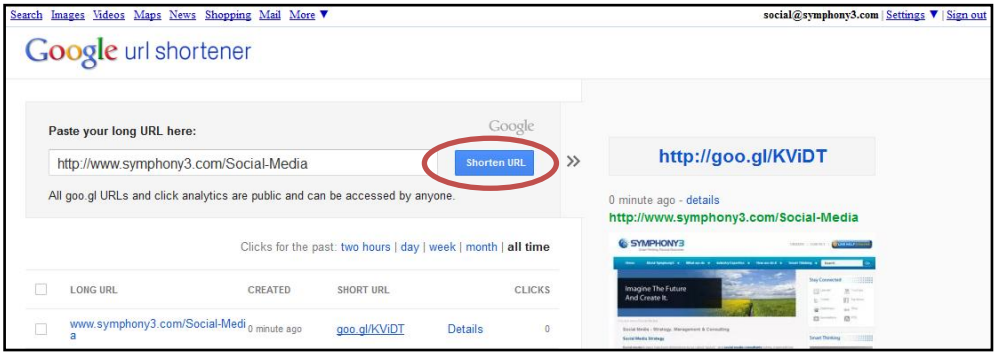
Note that these should only be used when posting from a client program: posting regular or shortened links via www.twitter.com results in their replacement with t.co versions.

Two popular services (Goo.gl and Bit.ly) are described below.

- Original link: http://www.symphony3.com/Social-Media (37 characters)
- Goo.gl version: http://goo.gl/KViDT (19 characters)
- Bit.ly version: http://bit.ly/JjWU4S (20 characters)
- Bit.ly customised version: http://bit.ly/S3social (22 characters)

GOO.GL

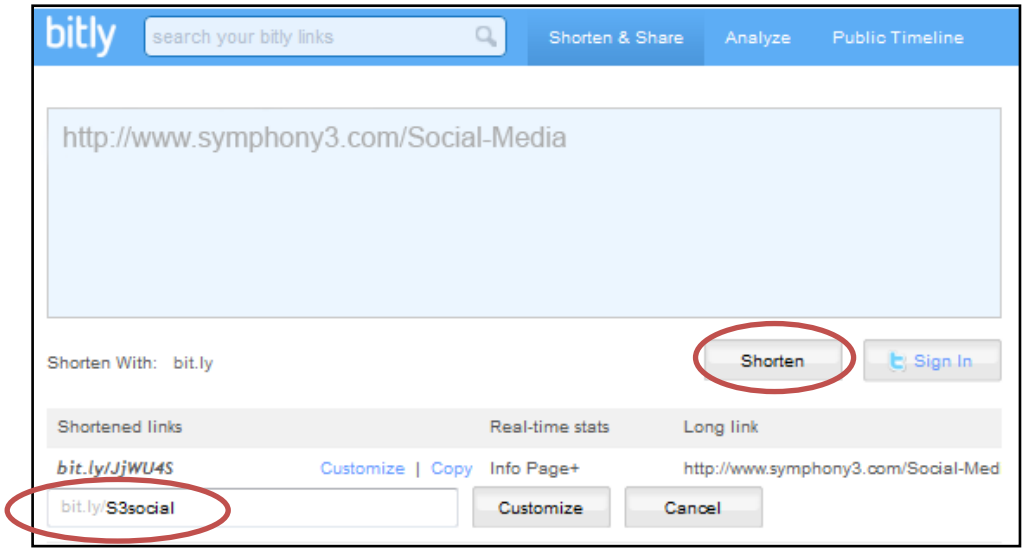
Google's own service can be found at http://goo.gl/. It requires a Google login to access the full range of features, which include detailed analytics, and an automatically generated Quick Recognition (**QR**) barcode that can be used to scan the link using a smartphone.



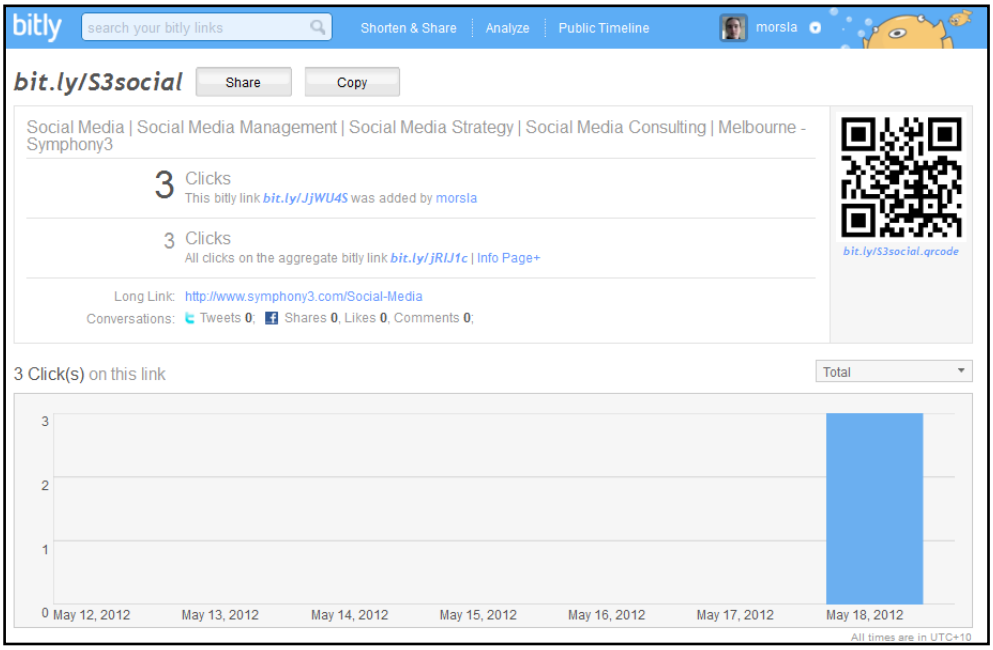
BIT.LY

You can log in with to the service at http://bit.ly/ using a Twitter account, or create a free Bit.ly account to access the full range of features. Bit.ly offers similar features to Goo.gl, but adds the ability to **create customised URLs**. It is also supported by powerful client programs like Sprout Social, which can automatically use the service when posting links.

To shorten a link on the Bit.ly website, enter it into the blue box and click “Shorten.” You then have the option of customising it by clicking “Customise” and selecting a new label for the link.



Click on “Info Page +” to see **analytics information** for the shortened link, including a QR code.



Appendix B: Client software

DESKTOP CLIENTS

These are many alternatives to the Twitter web interface. These are known as “client” programs, and allow you to manage your Twitter account from a standalone piece of software.

- **More intuitive user interface**. You need something that you find easy to use. The Twitter website is a one-size-fits-all design, whereas client programs are tailored to particular types of use.
- **Searches and lists**. If you use these frequently, you may want to use a client that makes them as accessible as possible.
- **Single-column** formats are clean and uncluttered, and well suited to managing a single account. **Echofon** (http://www.echofon.com/) is a good example of this type.
- **Multi-column** formats are better suited to managing multiple accounts, or running multiple searches at the same time. **Hootsuite** (http://www.hootsuite.com) and **Tweetdeck** (http://www.tweetdeck.com) are popular examples of this type.

MOBILE CLIENTS

You’ll often want to read or post to Twitter while away from your computer – particularly at conferences and other events. There is an official “Twitter for Mobile” app available, although many alternatives exist.

- Try to use a client that is **available on desktop and mobile devices**. These can generally synchronise, meaning that all devices will show you an up to date list of what you have read and responded to.
- **iPhone** users have a wider range of mobile clients available, though the most popular programs are also available on the **Android** Store.

INTEGRATED LISTENING POST SOFTWARE

If you are using multiple social media channels, you may want to connect all of your accounts to a single service for more efficient reading and posting. These

- **Hootsuite** (http://www.hootsuite.com) is a good low-budget option. You can connect many different types of accounts to it, but each must be managed in a separate column.
- **Sprout Social** (http://www.sproutsocial.com) is a good medium-budget option, combining reporting and analytics for your accounts. It combines inbound and outbound messages from all of your accounts into a central Smart Inbox and Sent Messages area, allowing you to easily track and respond to issues on any of your accounts.
- At the premium end of the scale, products like **Radian6** (http://www.radian6.com) offer extremely powerful monitoring and analytics tools for managing large, complex social media engagements.

my community life

City of KINGSTON

PO Box 1000, Mentone, VIC 3194 1300 653 356 131 450
mycommunitylife@kingston.vic.gov.au **mycommunitylife.com.au**